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ABSTRACT

Teachers may find out about research studies through professional conferences, conventions and meetings, inservice teacher education courses, professional literature, and conferences with faculty members of colleges and universities. Translators of research may present the results of studies in programs for the classroom teacher. Perhaps the greatest need today is for the translator to produce viable programs of instruction for the classroom teacher on such problems as the link between the structure of language and the structures of listening, speaking, reading, and writing a total language program. This is needed today if teachers are to implement the findings of significant research studies to effect change in instructional strategies. These reports and programs must be made available to the classroom teacher in a simple uncluttered manner, without an overemphasis on statistics. Only then will the classroom teacher be in a position to add or delete practices of instruction for maximum pupil growth in reading and all other areas of language. (Author)

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What Research in Reading Education Has Made No Difference to the Classroom Teacher? Why?

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In 1963 Early (18) stated the functions of research were to develop new hunches and new questions. Shuy (37) believed ineffective theories and tools have been used to research unimportant things. Blackman (6) related one of the limitations of research was implementation of change in educational practices, he referred to the dissemination lag or research-classroom gap that existed. Perhaps some hunches, questions and theories in educational practices in teaching reading may be reconsidered or reviewed in reference to the classroom teacher.

According to Hall and Ribovich (21) teachers used a variety of skills in individual and group activities; including round robin reading for the entire class. They contended the core of reading instruction should be to help learners reconstruct messages from print. Gutknecht (20) pointed out that teachers in grades one through five used a number of practices in reading and language arts instruction that were not based on any reading theory, such as; allegiance to one method, stress on rules of grammar, round robin reading for oral performance, nonacceptance of diverse dialects, and isolated drills on unknown words. Artley (3) reported specific teacher behaviors that had positive affects on reading achievement, they were: oral reading, creativity and enthusiasm; negative influences were drill, round robin oral reading, and book reports of independent reading.

Reading is being taught to diverse groups of children with a multiplicity of approaches in many classrooms of various organizational patterns. These organizational patterns included inter and intra levels of homogeneous or heterogeneous

groups, team teaching or cooperative teaching. Downing(15) suggested three dimensions that affect pupil learning and teacher selection of teaching strategies; child or curriculum centered education, formal or informal approaches and individualized or whole class methods. There is no set pattern for teaching reading in this country. Early(19) reminded us that reading was not included in Language Arts in some elementary school curriculums.

Before classroom practices are changed, teachers must have an opportunity to know about the results of pertinent studies. Singer,(38) translator of research studies into classroom practices found that in order for these findings to make a difference, the results have to be taken through a number of steps before they are usable in the classroom. Other barriers may prevent the classroom teacher from utilizing the results of research. *Aaron(1) listed four problems a researcher may encounter in the reading area:

1. Many perception studies are performed in laboratory-type situations that differ considerably from the classroom setting
2. Broad generalizations may be drawn from a very limited study
3. The researcher may clothe an insignificant or poorly designed study in an elaborate statistical dress

*Aaron, Ira E. Translating Research into Practice: Reading Readiness, Visual Perception, and Auditory Perception. In Mildred A. Dawson (compiler), Teaching Word Recognition Skills. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971, 50-51.

4. The interpreter of research may draw implications for practice when such implications are of doubtful value.

When children come to school they have learned the linguistic elements of the dialect of their own community. Teachers can expand and extend this knowledge children already possess, thus helping them acquire the needed facility and competence of the majority dialect. As Jenkinson(24) declared reading is freedom, toleration of diversity, and individualism in choice.

The classic study of Morphett and Washburne(33) was the epitome for research studies on early childhood children, they concluded the mental age for beginning reading was six and a half years. Much of the thinking in this country about beginning reading has been related to this study. Kirk(27) did a study in language, intelligence, and aptitudes with early childhood mentally retarded children. He found nursery school experience for retarded children was positive. Another important study was the Bloom(7) research on the development of intelligence in early childhood children. Results of this study indicated half of the intellectual ability of the child was developed by age four and at age eight, eighty percent had been developed. Durkin(16) did a similar study like Kirk's with normal children of working-class parents. She found early language programs depended on the child and the school environment. The findings of these studies refute the results of the Morphett and Washburne study.

Markwardt(31) said language was one form of social behavior, Bruner(9) thought language was an internal process,

Harrington(22) considered language as a system of communication, while Weaver and Kingston(46) noted oral communication skills were necessary for mastery of developmental tasks. Lenneberg(30), Myklebust(34), and Smith(39) equated language development with motor development. According to Downing's(14) theory of linguistic development, the main task of the child is to find the relationship between spoken and written language in beginning reading.

One of the most widely accepted deficit model language programs is that of Bereiter and Engelmann(4), they believed disadvantaged preschool children should be taught the majority dialect before being taught to read. In this study, they reported significant gains. Strickland(42) reported a literature-language program was successful which expanded the language of kindergarten children to include the majority dialect without negating their own dialect. Rystrom(36) found dialect did not cause reading failures, pupils can be taught to read if teachers accept diverse dialects. Burke(10) concluded the key to reading was language growth and flexibility not abandonment of dialects. Wakefield and Silvaroli(45) reported results of no significant differences between sentence patterns of first grade children, economic background was a stronger influence on oral language than ethnic background, they suggested the disadvantaged has a paucity of language because the language at school is not included in their repertoire. Kirk(28) found in a review of studies on ethnic differences in psycholinguistic abilities as measured by the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities; black children were superior in auditory memory while Indian

and Mexican-American children were superior in visual memory.

Arnold(2) found oral-aural instruction superior in reading for bilingual disadvantaged children. Carrow(11) reported monlingual disadvantaged children made higher scores on auditory comprehension than the bilingual disadvantaged group. Berger and Das(5) found bilingual children had difficulty learning to use language as a tool, they did not possess knowledge of the language patterns and structures. They concluded the children needed instruction in verbal successive learning early.

The controversy between oral and silent reading has been apparent for years. Teachers are using both techniques to assess skills of word knowledge. Children confronted with unknown words attempt to unlock them with phonetic analysis, contextual cues or guessing. The cloze techniques have been used effectively since 1953, as a readability measure, oral, silent and written comprehension assessment, and linguistic analysis. Blumenfeld and Miller(8) found that the cloze technique reflected students knowledge of linguistic abilities. Cazden(12) cited in a review of cloze techniques that Salzinger found a positive correlation between the relationship of the reader and the style of the author. Williams(48) reported children did not use configuration or shape as cues for word recognition skills, but they attempted to use contextual cues from the remainder of the sentence.

Reading, speaking and writing are interrelated skills which the child learns together, the teacher must use a variety of methodology and materials embracing phonetic analysis, the language-experience approach, and linguistics if each child is

to become an effective user of the majority dialect. When a child is engaged in meaningful activities he is coordinating the affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains, functioning as an entity.

All children are not as fortunate as others, every child does not have normal language developmental patterns, some children have language problems. McGrady(32) recognized this problem when he found language disorders were usually internal. Kirk and Kirk(29) indicated some normal children are retarded in reading progress which may be corrected by classroom instruction.

Standardized tests used for reading diagnosis should be normalized on all ethnic groups if the tests are to become effective measures of assessment used to categorize pupils. One such test that classroom teachers may use is the SRA Assessment Survey(41), one combined score is given for the three areas of language, mathematics and reading achievement. This score is referred to as the 3R core of the multilevel battery.

Thorndike(44) stated any test or observation of behavior is a small sample of the total behavior of the child and the obtained score is a rough estimate of the child's ability. Wedell(47) described diagnosis as a short term period of systematic observation for information that may be obtained over a longer period of informal observation.

Doehring(13) assessed the abilities of retarded readers with specific reading disabilities, the results indicated a positive correlation between reading disability, visual and verbal sequential processes. Killian(25) found bilingualism was not an important variable in language development and

visual motor performance. Robinson(35) supported the results of a review of the effectiveness of perceptual training to improve reading. She found no conclusive evidence to substantiate the practice.

Teachers are the motivators, keys to the emotional learning climate of the classroom. Talbert(43) concluded the best way to study teachers is to be one. King(26) proclaimed the climate of the classroom is dependent upon the personality of the teacher, when the relationship between the teacher and pupils is positive, children develop self-confidence, self-worth and independence. Hymes(23) believed the teacher needed linguistic knowledge and an accepting attitude to set the stage for learning. Spache(40) remarked differences in teacher and pupil relationships determine pupil achievement rather than methods or materials. Barly(17) emphasized the significance of the teacher in diagnostic teaching which she considered the skill or art of an effective teacher.

Teachers may find out about research studies through professional conferences, conventions and meetings; in-service-teacher courses; professional literature, and conferences with faculty members of colleges and universities. Translators of research may present the results of studies in programs for the classroom teacher. Perhaps the greatest need today is for the translator to produce viable programs of instruction for the classroom teacher on answers to such problems as the link between the structure of language to the structures of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, a total language program. This is needed today if teachers are to implement the findings

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